

Khutbah @ Masjid al Salam, Logan, Queensland, 27th July 2018

Topic – Tawhid & its Categories

Islam is established upon 5 pillars, with the first pillar being shahada (الشهادة) – testimony of faith).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ = There is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger (this is the most correct translation of the shahada in the English language).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ Can be referred to as tawhid al ibadah
مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ Can be referred to as tawhid al risalah

So the question is, why are we here? Are we simply here to eat, drink and play? If this is the case we are no better than animals. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) addresses our purpose in Surah Thaariyat (51:56) -

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَنَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (Sahih Int).

Tawhid (توحيد) was the call of the prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) during the Mekkan period of his messenger-ship (13 years). Naturally, the prophet also stressed tawhid heavily during his 10 years in Madina as well. In fact, his dawah started with tawhid in front of the Ka'bah in Makkah and ended with tawhid in the lap of Aisha (رضي الله عنها) in Madina. Yet many Muslims think that tawhid is simply on the lips by reciting لا إله إلّا الله without fully understanding what tawhid is, and what it entails.

Tawhid relates to the haqooq (حقوق) of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى), and if one does not fulfil this, then one can not fulfil the rights of the slaves of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). A Muslim, in order to submit fully to tawhid is obligated to believe in the following, namely:

- 1) Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is unique in His actions. He is the creator, sustainer and sole governor of His creation. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) forgives in a manner that is not comparable to how humans forgive because Allah's forgiveness eclipses the forgiving actions shown by His slaves to others. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) grants mercy to his slaves. However, His mercy is not comparable to the mercy of His creation because Allah's mercy eclipses the merciful actions shown by His slaves to others. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) brings life after death and death after life. Surah Yunus (10:31) states -

فَلَمَن يَزِدُ فَكُمْ مَنِ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيْتَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْمَيْتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَن يُنْذِرَ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

Say, "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?" They will say, "Allah," so say, "Then will you not fear Him?" (Sahih Int).

Even Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab believed that Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) was unique in His actions yet they were declared kuffar by Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). Thus, simply believing that Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is unique in His actions is not sufficient to fulfil tawhid.

- 2) The actions of Allah's slaves must single out Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone. This must manifest itself in the heart, upon the tongue and on the limbs of His slaves. Making ibadah to other than Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is shirk. This is where the prophets differed with their people i.e. the people were making shirk in regards to their acts of worship and their respective prophets called on them to only make worship to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone. Thus, whilst Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab did not dispute that Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) was unique in His actions, they violently fought the prophet and his message of tawhid, namely singling out one's actions and worship only for Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). Thus, all acts of ibadah are done on the basis for Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) alone, without intermediaries.
- 3) Recognise and affirm that Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) has the most beautiful and perfect names and attributes.

- 3.1) Affirm whatever Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) affirmed about Himself and the affirmations the prophet Muhammad (صلی الله علیہ وسلم) made regarding Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) in the sunna.

For example, we affirm what Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) states about Himself in Surah Saad (38:75) i.e. that he has two hands (NB - that befit His majesty) -

قَالَ يٌَٰبِيلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَ أَسْتَكْبِرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْغَالِيْنَ

[Allah] said, "O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty?" (Sahih Int).

- 3.2) Absolutely nothing resembles Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) e.g. Surah Shoorah (42:11) -
- لَيْسَ كَمِثْيَهٖ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ**

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (Sahih Int).

- 3.3) Do not ask or try to understand the 'how' of Allah's attributes e.g Surah Ta-ha (20:5) -

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established. (Sahih Int).

In relation to this ayah a man asked Imam Malik: "**How did Allah make istiwa on the throne?**" Imam Malik responded: "**Istiwa is not unknown, the modality of it is inconceivable in the mind; but belief in it is obligatory, and inquiring about it is an innovation. You are an innovator.**" And he gave orders for this man to be taken out from his lecture.

Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is above his arsh (throne), separate from His creation, in a manner that befits His majesty. To state that Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) is everywhere is a pagan belief, rather

what ahlu sunnah says is that Allah's 'ilm (knowledge) is in everyplace.

Thus, to be Muslim one has to submit to tawhid by:

1. Affirming the unique actions of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى).
 2. Singling out one's actions of ibadah for Allah alone. (سبحانه و تعالى)
 3. Affirming the names and attributes of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى).
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